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ABSTRACT

Journalists' knowledge of news is finally reducible to their commonsensical understanding of it, which is to say that common sense is not still another way of dealing with how journalists know news but instead the very foundation on which that knowledge rests. Common sense does not simply entail some shared cognitive facility that enables people to perceive the world in similar ways; it entails a learned and considered response to the world. Taking common sense seriously means that young journalists should come to appreciate the fundamental "immethodicalness", as Geertz called it, of humanity's unassuming efforts to make sense of the world. Accepting common sense as a legitimate and viable system of thought can reclaim epistemology from its reduction to methodology and can therefore honor what inevitably shapes everyday knowledge, including journalists' knowledge of news: social practice. Treating news and journalists' knowledge of it in terms of common sense can recapture the realities of journalism and present those realities in a historical and cultural context that can bring to reporting and newswriting courses the kind of intellectual adventure they seldom engender. (Twenty notes are included.) (RS)

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COMMON SENSE AND THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG JOURNALISTS

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COMMON SENSE AND THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG JOURNALISTS

Be it law, medicine, engineering, or journalism, professionals share not only a formal knowledge of the kind associated with theories and treatises but an informal and largely tacit knowledge that often defies the rigor and reason of higher education. It is difficult to say in general terms what the relative power and influence of these two types of knowledge might be, except to observe that at times the informal or colloquial knowledge can make the difference between a minimally competent practitioner and one of distinction. We might also suppose that this second type of knowledge looms larger in the less developed professions, like journalism, where there are few treatises and even fewer theories.

No doubt educators appreciate the importance of the kind of down-to-earth wisdom professionals acquire on the job. Most professional schools, including programs in journalism and mass communication, require or at least encourage internships, apprenticeships, simulations and other similarly "practical" experiences. And yet, curiously, back in the classroom this presumably invaluable knowledge gets sanitized and scientized, and students are left with little opportunity to critically appraise the meaning and value of some of the more grubby and decidedly unscientific ways professionals come to know what they know. There is, we suspect, a wide and perhaps widening gap

between how journalists know what they know and what students are told about how journalists know what they know.

Our case in point is probably the most basic and surely the most important question of epistemology in journalism: How do journalists know news? From our review of basic newswriting and reporting texts--and we have tried to look at most of them--knowing news is almost invariably treated in terms of what are now commonly called the attributes or values of news: prominence, conflict, oddity, impact, proximity, and timeliness. To be sure, these values or attributes have been repeated so often to so many beginning journalism students that they are now being called the "classic" or "traditional" elements of news. "Generations of journalists," one recent text assures us, "have used similar criteria in deciding the news value of each day's happenings and in deciding which news stories are more important than others."[1]

Now our point is not that these news criteria are wrong or without value but that they have little to do with how editors and reporters operate in the everyday world of journalism. They may well specify <u>what</u> journalists know as news, at least insofar as that can be inferred from content analyses, but they tell us very little about <u>how</u> journalists know news. Put a little differently, the standard news criteria fail to account for what Robert Park recognized nearly half a century ago: "synthetic" knowledge of the kind that "gets itself embodied in habit and custom"--as opposed to "analytic" knowledge of the kind that gets "checked, tagged, [and] regimented"--may be difficult to

articulate but is nonetheless "likely to be the bulwark of most sound judgment in practical matters as well as the source of those hunches upon which experts depend in perplexing situations."[2]

It may be unremarkable to observe that how journalists know news is enormously influenced by that pervasive but elusive system of thought called "common sense." What is remarkable, however, is that so few textbook authors take common sense seriously; they tend to acknowledge its importance, dwell on it for a sentence or two, and then move on to a more elaborate--and generally a more respectful--discussion of the standard news criteria. Even from the late Curtis MacDougall, whose many editions of Interpretative Reporting elevated "Nose for News" to a section heading, common sense receives a brief and superficial treatment; if in fact "[c]ommon sense is indispensable for the reporter,"[3] MacDougall fails to explain how or why.

The fact that MacDougall regarded common sense as "indispensible" and yet could say so little about it points to the gap between professional practice and the teaching of practice. Apparently MacDougall knew that the "classic elements" were not sufficient--perhaps not even necessary--for the recognition of news. There was, he sensed, something behind or beneath those elements; something essential to the professional but something so basic that it could not be readily articulated or enumerated for the student. It is telling that MacDougall could only identify it as "common sense" and then say a few kind

words about it.

MacDougall and others in journalism education are not, of course, alone in this predicament. Potter Stewart's oft cited approach to defining obscenity, for example, reflects the same dilemma. In his concurring opinion in Jacobellis v. Ohio, a case that reversed the conviction of a movie theater manager for showing the French film Les Amants, Stewart argues that obscenity laws, in this instance Ohio law, should be limited to "hard-core pornography":

> I shall not today attempt further to define the kinds of material I understand to be embraced within that shorthand description; and perhaps I could never succeed in intelligibly doing so. But I know it when I see it, and the motion picture involved in this case is not that.[4]

While he could not say exactly how it was that he knew pornography, Stewart was certain that he would know it when he saw it--perhaps in much the same way journalists know news when they see it. Unlike MacDougall, however, Stewart did not even attempt to enumerate "elements"; he appealed directly and unashamedly to common sense.

In this essay we seek to say something not only kind about common sense but useful as well. Our goal, though, is not to present common sense as a conceptualization superior to--or a model of cognition in competition with--more conventional treatments of news. Rather, our contention is that journalists' knowledge of news is finally reducible to their common sensical understanding of it, which is to say that common sense is not still another way of dealing with how journalists know news but

instead the very foundation on which that knowledge rests. If we cannot subjugate journalists' common sense to codification, we can move toward a greater sensitivity to it and a heightened appreciation for it. And if in the end we cannot offer tips for teaching newswriting and reporting, we can at least advance a frame of reference--a state of mind--for thinking about the teaching of professional practice.

The Qualities of Common Sense

To begin with, common sense does not simply entail some shared cognitive facility that enables people to perceive the world in similar ways. It is not, anthropologist Clifford Geertz reminds us in his essay on the topic, a matter of judging that water is wet. Rather, common sense involves a learned and considered response to the world; it involves making sense of our senses. "No one, or no one functioning very well," Geertz points out, "doubts that rain wets"; but, he adds somewhat whimsically, "there may be some people around who question the proposition that one ought to come in out of it, holding that it is good for one's character to brave the elements--hatlessness is next to godliness." Accordingly, Geertz underscores the importance of the distinction between "the mere matter-of-fact apprehension of reality" and "the down-to-earth, colloquial wisdom, judgments or assessments" of that reality:

> When we say someone shows common sense we mean to suggest more than he is just using his eyes and ears, but is, as we say, keeping them open, using them

> judiciously, intelligently, perceptively, reflectively, or trying to, and that he is capable of coping with everyday problems in an everyday way with some effectiveness. And when we say he lacks common sense we mean not that he is retarded, that he fails to grasp the fact that rain wets and fire burns, but that he bungles the everyday problems life throws up for him: He leaves his house on a cloudy day without an umbrella; his life is a series of scorchings he should have had the wit not merely to avoid but not to have stirred the flames for in the first place.[5]

That common sense empowers our senses by coordinating and transforming simple perception into something more complex, namely comprehension, is precisely why Hannah Arendt describes common sense as the "sixth and the highest sense"; it is, she observes, the one sense that integrates our five "strictly individual" senses and their "strictly particular data" into a coherent whole: "It is by virtue of common sense that the other sense perceptions are known to disclose reality and not merely felt as irritations of our nerves or resistance sensations to our bodies."[6] Or as John Dewey once put it, being "familiarly acquainted" with the "things" of the world is the "distinguishing trait" of common sense; it is a general sense that provides a frame of reference for "matters with which actual living is directly concerned."[7]

Like other forms of knowledge, Geertz reminds us, common sense is a historically constructed system of thought with its own "historically defined standards of judgment"; and with other forms of knowledge, it "can be questioned, disputed, affirmed, developed, formalized, contemplated, even taught, and it can vary dramatically from one people to the next."[8] Above all else,

common sense represents a culturally bound understanding of the world and our experiences in it. It is indeed a "common" knowledge insofar as it is widely shared and readily accessible, but it is shared and accessible only among those whose values and assumptions render it intelligible. What we cannot generalize about, it follows, is the content of common sense.

But if little can be said across cultures about what common sense conveys, how it gets conveyed, as anthropologists have learned, can be treated transculturally. That is, while the content of common sense shifts--and sometimes quite radically--as we move from one set of values and assumptions to another, its form remains comparatively unchanged. And that form--an "everywhere-found cultural form," Geertz is convinced--begins to take shape as it is examined in terms of what appear to be its five basic properties: (i) practicalness, (ii) immethodicalness, (iii) accessibleness, (iv) thinness, and (v) naturalness.

Briefly, the practicalness of common sense points to its tangible and characteristically immediate consequences; common sense is a response to particular needs and serves those needs directly and practically. The immethodicalness of common sense underscores the importance of proverbial wisdom; common sense is known and shown not formally through doctrines, dogmas, theories, or treatises but through "epigrams, proverbs, obiter dicta, jokes, anecdotes, contes morals--a clatter of gnomic utterances." The accessibleness of common sense vivifies its egalitarian appeal; common sense requires "no esoteric knowledge, no special

technique or peculiar giftedness, and little or no specialized training." The thinness of common sense means that facts are obvious and mostly unambiguous; common sense deals with the world simply, typically graphically, and often quite literally. Finally, the naturalness of common sense, its most fundamental attribute, posits an unproblematic view of the world; the content of common sense is "depicted as inherent in the situation, intrinsic aspects of reality, the way things go."[9]

Gaye Tuchman is alluding to the "practicalness" of common sense when she observes that journalists tend to eschew formal categories or classifications of news and instead typify news in ways that "transform the idiosyncratic occurrences of the everyday world into raw materials that can be subjected to routine processing and dissemination."[10] In Tuchman's work, the utility of typifications--and thus the practicalness of common sense--is nicely illustrated in the familiar distinction between "hard" news and "soft" news. It is a distinction, Tuchman observes, of little conceptual import but of great practical consequence, which underscores the essential difference between "categories" and "typifications": Unlike the term "category," which implies a classification ruled salient by classifiers, the term "typification" denotes a phenomenological orientation, a "classification in which relevant characteristics are central to the solution of practical tasks or problems at hand and are constituted and grounded in everyday activity."[11]

One of the relevant characteristics of the hard news-soft news

distinction, to continue with Tuchman's example, concerns the obviously practical consideration of "scheduling": Whereas hard news tends to be unscheduled (an unexpected event--a fire, for example) or prescheduled (an expected event whose scheduling is controlled by its conveners--a city council debate, for example), soft news tends to be nonscheduled (journalists retains full control over when the "event-as-news" will be disseminated--a profile of a prominent citizen, for example).[12] Thus to know the difference between hard news and soft news is to understand, in decidedly practical terms, the extent to which the newsroom can exert control over the scheduling of news. Among journalists, in other words, news is not a theoretical construct but a practical accomplishment, and their knowledge of it--and often even their knowledge about it--remains inextricably wedded to the means of its production; for common sense in journalism, like common sense elsewhere, is more a matter of social practice than a function of individual cognition.

But it is perhaps the second property of common sense, which Geertz mischievously labels "immethodicalness," that can most usefully inform our thinking about the problems of knowing news. Immethodicalness alludes to the inconsistencies inevitable in a world of intractably diverse experiences, a world that often requires a "shamelessly and unapologetically ad hoc" approach to it. Common sense is "immethodical" in that it expresses itself not in formalized methods or codified laws but in a culture's store of proverbs and other opportunities for conventional wisdom

--"look before you leap" but "he who hesitates is lost" are among Geertz's examples, conventionally wise and yet contradictory, from our own time and place. Not the least part of common sense, then, is the wise choice of a proverb appropriate to the situation at hand.

Within the community of journalism, a familiar illustration of the immethodicalness of common sense is the admonition "get the story," which most reporters know from experience means something more than simply getting the facts. In contradistinction to another newsroom precept, "stick to the facts," somehow reporters understand that "getting the story" means not only knowing which facts to get but knowing as well how to treat those facts. Indeed, we might go so far as to observe that a good indication of an inexperienced reporter--or, less charitably, a sure sign of an inept reporter--is someone whose fact-gathering abilities seem to be limited by an inability to know what the story is. For the journalist, it follows, not the least part of common sense is the wise choice of a narrative form--"the story."

Knowing News by Knowing the Story

Consider three examples of knowing news by knowing the story. In two of these examples a master practitioner helps a young journalist to come to terms with the essential immethodicalness that underlies--or perhaps <u>belies</u>--any attempt to formalize a method or enumerate a set of criteria for knowing news. And in all three examples, a master draws on the store of conventional

wisdom for an "unapologetically ad hoc" and yet an entirely appropriate--even wise--choice of story material.

Our first example may be familiar but it invites re-reading with a sensitivity to the immethodicalness by which the story was generated. Historian Robert Darnton, who worked for five years as a reporter for the Newark Star Ledger and the New York Times, recalls in vivid detail his dismal first summer on the police beat at the Star Ledger when, by chance, he first encountered the importance of knowing "the story." By the end of the summer, he remembers, "I had written a great many stories but had not received a by-line." Then one day, with nothing better to do, he reviewed a police report about a boy whose bicycle had been stolen. With every reason to believe his editors would not be interested, he "produced four paragraphs on it anyway, in order to practice writing"; he then shared it with "one of the regulars during a lull in the poker game." Darnton's colleague, apparently with some pity, took the piece, embellished it as necessary, and "typed out an entirely different version." With the new version in hand, the young journalist got on the phone to the boy's father and asked a few pertinent questions; for now he realized he had not merely a crime to report but a story to tell, and that story "required" a few additional facts. "Soon I had enough details to fit the new pattern of the story. I rewrote it in the new style, and it appeared the next day in a special box, above the fold, on the front page, and with a by-line."[13]

On reflection, and with an acknowledging nod to Helen MacGill

Hughes, whose history of News and the Human Interest Story he regards as one of the few analyses of "the socio-cultural aspects of newswriting," Darnton-the-historian now realizes that journalism "is heavily influenced by stereotypes and by preconceptions of what 'the story' should be"; for what his colleague had done for him is what any "clever writer" does: "imposes an old form on new matter in a way that creates some tension . . . and then resolves it by falling back on the familiar."[14] These old forms and familiar stories, Darnton observes, are the "long-term cultural determinants of the news," and they contribute immeasurably, though largely unconsciously, to the selection and expression of what today appears as news.

Darnton's first by-line reminds us that common sense is a sense of "how these things go." If common sense cannot be counted on to predict how things will go, they can at least alert us to how things can go. And it alerts us precisely by providing a culturally-sanctioned repertoire of stories that can be used to represent and account for how things have gone. Because the selection of a particular strategy from this repertoire always has an irreducible element of immethodicalness to it, the selection is always an opportunity to display good sense. The method--or rather immethod--of Darnton's mentor was not unlike the tribal elder who dispenses justice--and displays wisdom--by choosing the appropriate proverb to adjudicate a conflict. Like the elder, the mentor turned not to a formal code or method but to a wealth of practical experience to make an appropriate choice

of story; and once the story was chosen, the relevant and salient facts could be determined. What Darnton learned was, in part, immensely practical--how to write a news story. But Darnton gained some wisdom as well, for he came to know that news is not simply a creation in the present but a narrative form rich in culture and history.

If Darnton's story of a boy and his bicycle seems "soft," a feature in which a good storyline is obviously essential, then consider this "harder" example drawn from our interview with a distinguished investigative reporter.[15] "Let me give you an example of where pure intuition led me to an interesting story," said Bill Marimow of the Philadelphia Inquirer, who has twice won the Pulitzer Prize. "This is based solely on a reporter's experience and instincts--nothing else."

Marimow's example begins with a dozen reporters struggling to stay awake through a routine city council meeting. The clerk is reading a seemingly interminable list of new bills with typically unwieldy titles. "As I was sitting there I heard this long rambling discourse: 'Amended Elected Officials' Pension Plan A as amended April 3, 1956 . . . ," Marimow recalls. "I just wrote down 'Pension Plan A' in my notebook The clerk kept going and everyone else, including me, was kind of somnolent in there." After the meeting was over, however, Marimow looked through his notes and decided to read that particular bill. "It turned out that the city council was going to double its pension benefits at a time when the city administration had just raised property

taxes and was claiming there was a fiscal crisis," he remembers. "Now, no other reporter in the room got that story. But whenever I heard 'pensions' and 'elected officials' when I was covering the city council I said, 'Interesting!'" The story was soon in the Inquirer and the bill was soon back in committee where it died.

If Marimow can account for his news sense with a semblance of mathematical precision--"Pensions" + "Elected Officials" = "Interesting!"--it is because the equation was one he had solved before and he knew it would add up to news. Put another way, Marimow knew he had a story because he knew how these things--pensions and officials--can go.

Our interviews with investigative reporters also provide our second example of the mentoring of a young journalist. When Loretta Tofani of the Washington Post began work on what would turn out to be an award-winning series on rape in a suburban Maryland detention center, she had a vague sense that her story was incomplete. After several weeks of work, and with her editors anxious to get her story in print, Tofani turned to a colleague for advice:

> I went to another reporter . . . who was then at the Post and asked him to please help me. I had read his stories in the Post and felt that they were the kind of thing that this story could be. He didn't just find out what people were saying. He went to the source of things and found out what was really going on. I felt like I needed advice from him. He sat down with me one day in the newsroom. He spent an entire day asking me questions about what I had learned, who I had talked to, what the evidence was and how things worked. At the end of the day he said, "Well, look. You've got to get the medical records. Otherwise people are going to

> say these guys [the rape victims] are just making these stories up . . . . And you've got to talk to the jail rapists.

Initially, Tofani protested the suggestion that she needed to interview the rapists; she described it as "ridiculous--those guys aren't going to talk to me." But her colleague persisted: "They'll talk to you. They'll say something. You know the story of what happened so you know enough to ask them questions." And in the end, Tofani acknowledges, he was right:

> Those were the two essential elements to corroborate the story. All along I had been thinking, "Okay, what do I need next?" My answers were, "Okay, I need more rape victims. I need to talk to the police about what they found. I need to talk to the medical workers about what they see." I had established all the pieces of the puzzle but I wasn't going deep enough....I wasn't creative enough.

Like Darnton, Tofani sought advice from a more experienced reporter. Unlike Darnton, who had facts but no story, Tofani had a story but needed a <u>better</u> story, a more complete and compelling account of jail rape. Tofani's challenge was not simply to document jail rape but to tell a story about a penal system in moral disarray. Like many of the investigative reporters we have studied, Tofani needed not simply enough evidence but the right evidence to tell a distinctive and yet familiar story about guilt and innocence of institutional proportions.[16]

Once again, a young reporter who needed to know the appropriate story sought out the common sense--the wisdom--of someone who had more experience with "how these things go." Like Darnton, Tofani knew well enough how to draw information from public records and interviews; what she needed, as did Darnton,

was a lesson--as Hannah Arendt might put it--in comprehending the information. That both Tofani and Darnton took their experiences to be lessons in creativity, not journalistic methodology, attests to the essential immethodicalness of what young reporters must learn. For Darnton, the lesson resulted in a first by-line; for Tofani it led to a Pulitzer Prize.

Taking Common Sense Seriously

The experiences of Darnton, Marimow, and Tofani point to the importance of what can be learned when young journalists rub up against some good old common sense. If they are sensitive and appreciative, what rubs off is not so much the tricks of the trade or even an elder's proverbs but rather a style of thought--a style often of necessity immethodical but usually quite practical. What rubs off, in short, is a way of thinking attuned not only to the profession's traditions and practices but to the heritage of one's culture--its conflicts and passions, its precepts and principles. Both Darnton and Tofani, for example, learned not simply to recognize news but to comprehend and portray innocence and guilt, pathos and irony.

In the accounts of these reporters we have nothing less than memoirs about the getting of wisdom. These are the accounts of journalists who have come to understand that while the particulars of news may be new and perishable, the narrative forms in which they are embedded constitute a rich and enduring legacy--and not merely a legacy of American journalism but more

broadly a legacy of Western culture. What endures in the day's news are the tensions, conflicts, and dilemmas that have for reporters and readers alike the timeless appeal of literature: The news may be "contemporary and actual," Hughes writes, "but it is strongly identified with a familiar element in the social heritage of folklore and fiction."[17]

If these and other journalists cannot always pontificate on the history of news in all of its technical and formal glory, they nonetheless contend with that history through the "tangle of received practices, accepted beliefs, habitual judgments, and untaught emotions,"[18] to quote Geertz again, that guide them each day in their common-sensical understanding of news. Synthetically if not analytically, through customs and habits if not through lectures and texts, journalists know news as a genre of literature--and they know it with as much precision and confidence as physicians know the symptoms of disease or lawyers know how the courts work. If its immethodicalness defies the exhortations of science, the logic and power of journalistic common sense rests on historical ground no less firm.

Our point, then, is not that developing an appreciation for common sense will directly and immediately aid students in their search for news but that it might enhance their understanding of how journalists embark on that search and how, in the end, journalism arrives at some consensus--today and every day--about what is and what is not news. Accordingly, our contention is that students need to be alerted to the importance of not only

their senses but their sensibilities; that journalists' perceptual acuity is important but so too are their interpretive powers; that studying journalism requires not only examining journalists' demography and psychology but assessing as well their legendary physiognomy--their "eye for truth" or, better yet, their "nose for news." There is something to be said for those extra senses that allow journalists to understand the world not with detached objectivity but rather with a "mature subjectivity," as Michael Schudson puts it, a subjectivity "aged by encounters with, and regard for, the facts of the world."[19] After all, these are the faculties that Washington Post editor Ben Bradlee invoked to explain why in the final analysis he decided to publish Seymour Hersh's expose of the massacre at My Lai: "This smells right."[20]

The need to develop these faculties--or at least the need to develop an appreciation for them--is our rationale for insisting that young journalists be not merely inculcated with a technical sensibility (i.e., narrowly trained) but exposed to a wide range of human sensibilities (i.e., broadly educated). Understanding the immethodicalness of everyday journalism reminds us that educators must be quite modest in their claims about their ability to provide students with methods that yield correct answers. It reminds us that students become knowledgeable not by simply remembering the answer but by realizing the significance of the question.

Education in journalism should begin, therefore, by taking the

reality of common sense, and the possibility of wisdom, seriously. It should begin, specifically, by reminding young journalists that sound reporting methods are necessary, but seldom sufficient, for success in journalism. Despite Bill Marimow's tantalizing mathematical metaphor for spotting a story, all the in-depth interviews with all the award-winning journalists in all the world are not likely to yield a calculus of journalistic storytelling. Marimow's memoir is important not because it can tell students how to find a story worth re-telling yet again but because it makes them aware that finding such a story is what they must learn to do. Similarly, Robert Darnton's memoir is important not because it tells students how to recognize and report facts and stories but because it suggests that the two key questions--"What are the facts?" and "What is the story?"--cannot be answered apart from each other. And Loretta Tofani's memoir is worthy of our students' attention not because it shows which facts are always necessary but because it invites consideration of what it means for a story to be complete.

In sum, taking common sense seriously means that young journalists should come to appreciate the fundamental immethodicalness of humanity's unassuming efforts to make sense of the world. In more formal terms, accepting common sense as a legitimate and viable system of thought can reclaim epistemology from its reduction to methodology and can therefore honor what inevitably shapes everyday knowledge, including journalists'

knowledge of news: social practice. Of course, taking common sense seriously also means that young journalists will appreciate rigorous mental discipline and a healthy skepticism; indeed, just as there is much to be said on behalf of common sense, there is much about it that demands our scrutiny and criticism. But our overriding claim here is that by treating news and journalists' knowledge of it in terms of common sense--and by viewing journalism education as an opportunity for the exercise of wisdom--we can not only capture the realities of journalism but can present those realities in a historical and cultural context that can bring to reporting and newswriting courses the kind of intellectual adventure they seldom engender.

[1]Brian S. Brooks, George Kennedy, Daryl R. Moen, and Don Ranly, News Reporting and Writing, 3rd ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), p. 4.

[2]Robert E. Park, "News as a Form of Knowledge," pp. 33-52 in R.H. Turner, ed., Robert E. Park on Social Control and Collective Behavior (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 36.

[3]Curtis MacDougall and Robert A Reid, Interpretative Reporting, 9th ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1987), p. 16.

[4]378 U.S. 184,196-197 (1964); emphasis added. For an interesting assessment of the power and appeal of common sense as it relates to Ronald Reagan's rhetorical strategies, see Robert L. Ivie, "Speaking 'Common Sense' About the Soviet Threat: Reagan's Rhetorical Stance," Western Journal of Speech Communication, 48 (Winter 1984): 39-53; for a related discussion and a worthwhile account of the attributes of common sense, see William F. Lewis, "Telling America's Story: Narrative Form and the Reagan Presidency," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 73 (August 1987): 292-294.

[5]Clifford Geertz, Local Knowledge (New York: Basic Books, 1983), pp. 75-76. John Dewey also uses water to illustrate the distinction between sense as in "sensation" and sense as it applies in the term "common sense": "One has only to take account of water of common use and enjoyment to note the absurdity of reducing water to an assemblage of 'sensations,' even if motor-muscular elements are admitted. Both sensory qualities and motor responses are without place and significance save as they are enmeshed in uses and enjoyments. And it is the latter (whether in terms of water or any substance) which is a thing for common sense." See Dewey, "Common Sense and Science," pp. 270-286 in John Dewey and Arthur F. Bentley, Knowing and the Known (Boston: Beacon Press, 1949), p. 274.

[6]Hanna Arendt, The Human Condition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), pp. 208-209.

[7]Dewey, "Common Sense and Science," pp. 272-273.

[8]Geertz, p. 76.

[9]Geertz, pp. 90-91

[10]Gaye Tuchman, Making News (New York: Free Press, 1978), p. 58.

[11]Gaye Tuchman, "Making News by Doing Work: Routinizing the Unexpected," American Journal of Sociology, 79 (1977): 116-117.

[12]See Tuchman, Making News, pp. 50-54. An interesting exception to these typifications is investigative reporting, which can yield news that is both "hard" and nonscheduled; see James S. Ettema and Theodore L. Glasser, "On the Epistemology of Investigative Journalism," Communication, 8 (1985): 183-206.

[13]Robert Darnton, "Writing News and Telling Stories," Daedalus, 104 (Spring 1975): 190.

[14]Darnton, p. 189. See also Helen MacGill Hughes, News and the Human Interest Story (New York: Greenwood Press, 1940); see especially chapter seven, "Perennial Stories," pp. 184-216.

[15]This material comes from one of several interviews with investigative reporters conducted as part of a larger study of "The Ethics and Epistemology of Investigative Journalism," funded in part by the Gannett Foundation and the Graduate School of the University of Minnesota. Details on the time and place of the interviews, as well as transcripts of the interviews, are available from the authors.

[16]See James S. Ettema and Theodore L. Glasser, "Narrative Form and Moral Force: The Realization of Innocence and Guilt Through Investigative Journalism," Journal of Communication, 38 (Summer 1988): 8-26.

[17]Hughes, p. 210. For an interesting discussion of some of the historical connections between two presumably distinct narrative forms, news and the novel, focusing specifically on the shared literary convention of "authorial disavowal" (or "objective reporting," as it is known today among journalists), see Lennard J. Davis, "A Social History of Fact and Fiction: Authorial Disavowal in the Early English Novel," pp. 120-148 in E. W. Said, ed., Literature and Society (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980). Davis' discussion is in striking contrast to Charnley's observation that when journalists use the term "news story," it connotes no kinship with the short story or any kind of fiction." See Mitchell V. Charnley, Reporting, 3rd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975), p. 29.

[18]Geertz, p. 74.

[19]Michael Schudson, Discovering the News (New York: Basic Books, 1978), p. 192.

[20]Quoted in Dennis Chase, "The Aphilosophy of Journalism," The Quill, September 1971, p. 17.